

HOW TO HELP DURING LABOUR

Back Pain

The most common back pain experienced in pregnancy is lower back pain. This is mainly felt down in the sacrum and lumbar region. Massage, acupressure and heat can be of great benefit to this problem.

Before you start your treatment mix 8 drops of lavender oil and 6 drops of sandal wood oil into 500 ml of olive oil. This will be your massage oil and can be used whenever you massage.

Next, have the woman straddle a chair facing the opposite direction - them facing the back of the chair. They will need to be just in a pair of underpants or have no pants on so that you can rub some oil into their lower back and butt muscles. This won't be a problem if you are home because nobody else will see.

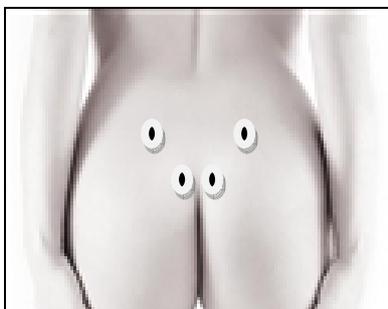
Find the very top of the fold of the butt cheeks. Some men show theirs regularly when wearing a pair of Stubbies in the back yard!

From this high point of the fold of the butt move your two thumbs out about 1-inch at a 45-degree angle till you find two depressions. These depressions are what we call the sacral foramen and are also the sites of two acupressure points. If you keep moving your thumb out slowly at this 45-degree angle you find 3 more depressions. This is because there are 4 sacral foramen on each side and each of these is an acupressure point. These points are called Bladder 27,28 29,and 30. Massage these points on either side using firm pressure. Also massage either side of the lower spine. After massaging, heat the area by either using moxa or a heat pack.

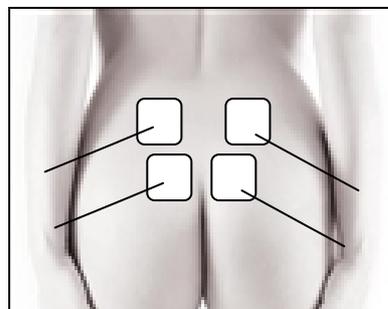
You can use a TENS machine - remember you get it from the physiotherapy department or selected chemists. Have a play around with it and get familiar with it because it can be a very useful tool during labor. It really helps reduce labor pain. It does feel funny at first, but persevere with it because it really does help.

Place the pads on either side of the butt cheeks on those acupressure points mentioned above. It needs to be in the sacral region and not higher than 2nd lumbar vertebrae. Most of the pain experienced during labor is in the sacral region. This one of the best alternatives to acupuncture during labor.

Points to massage



Placement of the TENS pads



Proper placement of the TENS pads

The bottom pads are about 1 inch out from the buttock crease at a 45 degree angle.

The top pads are out at a 45 degree angle from the buttock crease in the depression level with the 4th sacral foramen

Acupressure Points to Help with Labour & Oxytocin Release

- CO4 Colon 4- Known as the Emperial point for labor. It works by increasing peristalsis, stimulating that downward action, and calming the mind. The point is found at the midpoint between the first knuckle of the index finger and the first knuckle of the thumb – it's usually a tender point
- GB21 Gallbladder 21 -In China this point is used instead of syntocinon to help expel the placenta. Its action is to stimulate the body's own oxytocin. The point is also used to position a baby in a downward action for breech presentation. The point can be found on the top of the trapezius muscle - mid-point between the outer point of the shoulder near the AC joint and C7 on the cervical spine
- SP6 Spleen 6-Known as the 3 female meeting point. This point is the only point on the body where 3 acupuncture channels intersect. This point has had a long history of use for obstetric and gynaecological conditions. It helps to relax the uterine muscles, ripen the cervix (in labor only) and helps with cramping in the uterus. This point can be found 3 thumb breadths above the medial malleolus (ankle bone)
- BL60 Bladder 60- The name of this point in Chinese means- Mountain, or move mountain. It works by increasing oxytocin to help stimulate labor. It is also used for difficult labour where the baby may be posterior or caught on an anterior lip.

Sacral foramen

The main action of massaging or stimulating these points are to help with pain associated with labour.